living room, a tiny bedroom, and a kitchen. The living room was full: a score of young boys in dark coats over bright Russian shirts, their trousers pushed into shining boots; a half-dozen neatly and modestly dressed girls, in white blouses and dark skirts; a few elderly men. Thomas introduced us to a man with a gray beard, a bald skull, and mild, intelligent eyes—Sokolov, dean of the local schoolteachers and initiator of the convention. The young faces around us were flushed after a long ride in the cold, the young voices too loud for the room. Everybody was speaking and laughing at the same time. More and more sleighs arrived. Thomas clapped his hands and declared the convention open. Sokolov, elected chairman, read the agenda: (1) The objective of the schoolteachers' union; (2) its relation to political parties; (3) the plan of work. Then he turned the meeting over to Eugene and me.

We spoke about the need for unity and the organization drive in St. Petersburg and all over Russia. Next the teachers asked us to tell them more about the first general strike, the St. Petersburg Soviet, the Manifesto, the Kronstadt revolt, and revolutionary prospects. The convention warmed up.

During my speech, Lazar and half a dozen elderly peasants appeared in the room. After conferring with them, Thomas suggested a recess for refreshments. His words were met with loud laughter. "Where are your refreshments, Thomas? Your oven is cold." Thomas laughed with the others.

"My refreshments wouldn't amount to much," he said, "but these friends of mine have just told me that you are all guests of the community. They ask you to their homes to break bread with them." The peasants confirmed the invitation by deep bows.

The village, glittering under the snow and sun, seemed a fairyland. The peasants in heavy coats led their guests to their homes. Eugene and I followed Lazar. His log house was not big, but it was solidly built and well kept. Some fifteen persons, old and young, sat at the long table. The meal was festive and plentiful: a big cabbage pie, cabbage soup with pieces of meat, a thin cranberry pudding. Lazar and his eldest son, a bearded, broad-shouldered man with sharp eyes, led the conversation. They asked us whether new strikes were in sight and how soon the soldiers would come home from Manchuria. We questioned them about the political views of the peasants. Lazar's answer was vague. "That depends. . . . Each village is different. Some follow the teacher; others, the priest." He sighed deeply. "It would have been better but for the strike." Noticing our surprise, he added mildly, "Sure enough, you meant well in the city. Thomas explained to us: a strike helps simple people. But for us, the muzhiks, not every strike is good. When a factory or